

REMARKS

Claims 13-31 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 13, 24 and 26 are amended, and claims 27-31 are added. No new matter is added. Reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution and merely amend the independent claims for clarity; (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action by placing allowable subject matter of claims 14, 22, 23 and 25 into independent form; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

I. Formal Matter

The Office Action objects to claim 26 for informalities. This Amendment amends claim 26 to obviate this objection. Withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

II. Pending Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

A. Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 14-23 and 25-26. This Amendment adds claims 27-31, which are an independent form of allowable claims 14, 22, 23, 25 and 26, respectively. Applicants respectfully request allowance of these claims.

B. The Office Action rejects claims 13 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,165,007 to Higuchi et al. (Higuchi). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 13 is amended for better clarity and recites, *inter alia*, that a second connector includes a plate-shaped supporting member for supporting a leading end portion of a flat wire member and a housing for retaining the leading end portion of the supporting member.

Newly cited Higuchi discloses a cable connector for connecting upper and lower coaxial cables 2 with base contacts 8 accommodated in the base member 4. The coaxial cables are integrated in a flat or sheet-like structure as shown in Figures 2 and 6A-6C. The cables 2 are clamped between the cover insulators 3. The base member 4 and the cover insulator 3 are coupled with each other with the wires 2a and 2b engaging U-shaped portions 8a of base contacts 8.

The Office Action asserts that the portion 3c of Higuchi corresponds to a plate-shaped supporting member of claim 13. However, the portion 3c is referred to as partition walls located at both sides of each of the support contacts 7 and protruding higher than the signal wires 2b. See column 4, lines 51-59. In addition, the wires 2a and 2b are half-stripped as shown in Figure 7 and separately turned around the support contacts 7 as shown in Figures 3, 4 and 10. On the other hand, the flat wire member of the claimed invention is a flat one piece body with its wires integrated with each other, and its leading end portion is movable in its widthwise direction relative to the supporting member.

Referring to a copy of Figures 9 and 10 attached to the Office Action, the Office Action further asserts that the leading end portion (A) of the flat wire member 2 is movable in a widthwise direction and positioning member (B) is to engage a side of the leading end portion (A) of the flat wire member (2) to position the leading end portion (A) in its widthwise relative to the contact arm (8a). However, Figure 9 shows that the shoulder portion B of the base member 4 engages protrusions 3b of the cover member 3 but not the leading end of the flat wire member. However, Claim 13 recites that a positioning member of

the claimed invention is to engage a side of the leading end portion of the flat wire member to position the leading end portion in its widthwise direction.

As such, Applicants respectfully asserts that claim 13 is distinct from the applied prior art.

Claim 24 is allowable at least for its dependence on allowable base claim, as well as for the features it recites. That is, claim 24 recites that the second connector further includes means for placing the flat wire member on the plate-shaped supporting member in a state that the flat wire member is inclined downward toward its leading end with respect to the plane of the plate-shaped supporting member to prevent interference between the leading end and a first connector when the leading end portion of the flat member is inserted into the first connector.

Referring to a copy of Figure 10 attached to the Office Action, the Office Action asserts that the flat wire member is inclined (adjacent C) downward to its leading end (A of 2a, b) with respect to a plane (engaged surfaces of 3c) to prevent interference between the leading end (A) and the first connector (adjacent 4). However, the wires shown in Figure 10 are separated from each other and turned around individual support contacts 7 with the leading end portions obliquely extending upward to expose out of the cover member 3 to be cut off at the cutting lines.

Applicants respectfully assert this is not for prevention of interference. As seen in Figure 10, the rounded portion of the wire 2a fits in the U-shaped portion 8a of the base contact 8. On the other hand, the leading end of the flat wire member of the present invention is a flat one piece body and its leading end is likely to rise up and engage the first connector to obstruct smooth insertion of the flat wire member along with its supporting plate. As a countermeasure to this, the leading end is inclined toward to its leading end such that the leading end does not rise.

At least for the reasons described above, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 13-31 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Stephen P. Catlin
Registration No. 36,101

JAO:SPC/kzb

Date: December 3, 2003

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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